

PART ONE: BACKGROUND

THE FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL

Established in 1989 to improve policies affecting children and families, the Washington State Family Policy Council includes: the governor; the superintendent of public instruction; four legislators; the departments of commerce, early learning, employment security, health, and social and health services; and the office of public defense. The Council is also responsible to oversee Community Public Health and Safety Networks (Community Networks), 42 special purpose districts charged with reducing the rates of child abuse and neglect, youth substance abuse, youth violence, dropping out of school, teen pregnancy and male parentage, youth suicide and suicide attempt, and domestic violence.

Established in 1994, Community Networks are built on the tried and true principles of democracy. Unlike direct service programs, which importantly help individuals in their moment of need, Community Networks are uniquely designed to foster community responsibility for changing the social, economic, health and other conditions that generate child abuse and neglect, dropping out of school and other major social problems.

Together the Council and its local affiliates form a family-community-state partnership with a proven track record of improving Washington's child- and family-serving systems and their outcomes. The success of the Family Policy Council partnership stems from its 21st century model of collaboration, which utilizes networks, hubs and the power of self-organization to solve the most challenging and complex problems. This successful business model requires leadership and management that emphasize a mix of guidance, incentives, support and continuous learning. Like web-based analogues such as eBay, the Family Policy Council provides an accessible infrastructure for broad public participation while also sustaining business practices and controls that, much like PayPal, ensure accountability and the achievement of expected outcomes.

Family Policy Council Education, mandated by statute, functions to ensure innovation, quality, and success across the system as a whole. Education: 1) supports a culture and generates conditions that foster continuous learning and innovation, and 2) delivers content and instruction to improve knowledge and skills.

EDUCATION PLAN: PURPOSE

In order to achieve its statutory mandate to "develop a technical assistance and training program to assist communities in creating and developing community networks and comprehensive plans" (RCW 70.190.100(2)), the Family Policy Council sustains education programming and systematic technical assistance as well as business practices needed for continuous learning and capacity building.

The 2009 – 2014 Family Policy Council Education Plan:

- Identifies the established practices and other factors that serve as the foundation for education decision making;

- Defines education priorities and situates them within the broader strategic purposes and business practices of the organization;
- Guides education investment decisions;
- Recommends training methods, essential content, quality control measures, and other tactics most likely to support the achievement of current organizational priorities; and
- Identifies emerging opportunities and issues which, if addressed through education, will further develop the continuous learning environment that fosters Family Policy Council success.

PART TWO:

EDUCATION PROGRAM SUMMARY

IMPLEMENTATION HISTORY

It is the purpose of the education program “to assist communities in creating and developing community networks and comprehensive plans” (RCW 70.190.100(4)) where a comprehensive plan is: “a two year plan that examines available resources and unmet needs for a county or multicounty area, barriers that limit the effective use of resources, and a plan to address these issues that is broadly supported by local residents” (RCW 70.190.010(4)).

Initially, Family Policy Council training was designed to convey State expectations regarding Community Networks, along with known tools for community organizing and needs assessment (1994-1996). This information was delivered by contracted consultants who developed standardized workshops and related materials. This approach to training ensured that every community received the same information on the purpose of Community Networks and the State’s expectations as the community was creating a Network from scratch and developing its initial plan.

Once Networks were up and running, both the focus of and methods for education shifted. Responding to the uniqueness and complexity of the Network mandate, the Family Policy Council emphasized peer-to-peer learning, using Open Space Technology and similar methods to structure participation (1996-1999). The peer-to-peer approach helped to build identity in the field; the Partners Summit brought community members and legislators together over specific issues, laying the foundation for today’s civic engagement education; and the design importantly served as a rich and informative needs assessment.

By 1999 it was clear that Community Network Education was likely its own highly complex, rich and textured field of learning. Content and methods would need to be designed to engage volunteers and support learning at the community level. Events would need to attract a broad range of partners, reach to them at their own place of development, and in addition, fuel on-going learning across the community.

Therefore, in 1999, the Family Policy Council determined that meeting its statutory obligation to develop a technical assistance and training program necessitated drawing from the established field of adult education/learning to optimize education programming and to maximize results from investment.

EDUCATION EVENTS

Beginning in 2000, the Family Policy Council convened four education events each year:

The Network Retreat (September)

Held at small venues throughout the state, the Network Retreat is generally focused on the day-to-day responsibilities and operations of the Community Network. Topics have included contracting, compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, and implementation of Program Review (RCW 70.190.110).

Family Policy Council Partners Summit (November)

Held at a large venue along the I-5 corridor, the Family Policy Council Partners Summit is intended to engage state and local partners in an exploration of leading edge research related to the problem behaviors, their antecedents, risk and protective factors, and promising interventions. Topics have included mental health, innovation, and resilience.

Day in Olympia (February, even-numbered years; March, odd-numbered years)

Held in Olympia during legislative session each year, this event promotes civic engagement. Topics have included legislative process, Washington State budget cycle, making recommendations to the Legislature (per Chapter 70.190 RCW), and implementation of Program Review.

Summer Conference (May or June)

Held at medium-sized venues throughout the state, the Summer Conference is intended to build skills and address emerging issues that move Networks and their collaborative efforts forward. Topics have included: interest-based negotiation and collaborative problem solving, inclusion, and working with the media.

This calendar both reflects and leverages the business calendar of the Family Policy Council system. For example, Summer Conference focuses on emerging issues at the time when: 1) Networks are required by the Family Policy Council to be reporting on the previous biennium and planning their next round of investments; 2) legislators are identifying and gathering information for the next legislative session; and 3) local governments and member agencies are preparing their budgets.

Taken together, the annual events serve five systems functions in addition to achieving specified learning goals and objectives:

1. Strengthen the culture of the Family Policy Council family-community-state partnership, including its values, business practices, and priorities.
2. Make relevant aspects of the culture explicit so that all partners are able to participate meaningfully in the system.
3. Perform rituals, such as gathering, that celebrate the system and its accomplishments, strengthen the culture, welcome new participants, and cultivate common identity.
4. Add new information, tools, and skills to the knowledge ecology.
5. Create the conditions for innovation, which includes opportunities to network, reflect, and share information in formal and informal ways.

THE EDUCATION BUSINESS MODEL

Beginning in 2000 the Family Policy Council convened a committee of Community Network partners to establish education standards. Although it was disbanded in 2005 due to budget cuts, the principles developed by this group continue to guide the business and practices of Family Policy Council Education.

Principle One: Inclusiveness

It is of paramount importance that volunteers conducting the business of the State (Community Network Board members) experience inclusiveness and welcoming at all education events. This approach supports on-going retention of volunteers, increases motivation to participate, and reflects the core values and brand of the Family Policy Council. The Family Policy Council does not erect financial or physical barriers to participation. Therefore:

1. It is the business practice of the Family Policy Council to offer an inclusive registration fee that is paid by the Community Network or other community organization. The fee includes overnight accommodations in accordance with OFM travel regulations and covers all meals during the conference. By statute, many of the individuals participating in Networks are low income, and as a practical matter, many volunteers are elders living on a fixed income. In addition, many participants have limited access to credit. Every effort is made to minimize costs, for example, by negotiating with hotels for per diem or sub-per diem rates, locating events in jurisdictions with the lowest per diem rates, and carefully selecting start and end times.

Importantly, most hotels require a credit card to secure reservations and/or “cover” incidentals. This issue is routinely addressed in contract negotiations, and it is the practice of the Family Policy Council not to use hotels that will not waive their credit card policy. Typically, the hotel agrees to ask for a card, but if refused, to book the reservation or allow the check-in without further discussion. A purchase order is used to secure reservations and in the unlikely event of a no-show, the Family Policy Council recovers payment from the offending party. All Network staff are trained in this process and its financial implications; the process has run smoothly for a decade.

2. Family Policy Council complies with ADA. Venues are carefully assessed for elevators, restroom facilities and other accommodations; experience has shown that the primary disability among participants is mobility impairment. All marketing materials give instructions for obtaining accommodation for disability.

Principle Two: Community Engagement

The Family Policy Council is responsible to support the development of communities and community capacity, and siting decisions should be used to greatest advantage. Unlike some annual conferences offered by other entities, Family Policy Council events do not return to the same hotel or same city year after year. Rather, the Partners’ Summit moves among venues on the I-5 corridor and the Summer Conference and Network Retreat are offered throughout the state. This offers three advantages:

1. A substantial number of dollars, with all the community development benefits of economic investment, flow to the widest possible array of Washington communities, including extremely rural or economically depressed locales such as Pacific and Okanogan Counties as well as more well-known venues.

2. Community members, who typically use vacation time in order to act in their volunteer capacity, are able to attend when conferences are held nearby. It is not uncommon to see four or five times as many community members participate in a local conference compared to an event that requires travel. Rotating conferences ensures that every region of the state enjoys this advantage periodically.
3. Out of town participants are able to observe the unique assets and barriers faced by their colleagues in accomplishing the work. A vibrant form of peer-to-peer support emerges as Network members ask questions (e.g., “How do you get people to attend meetings in such a sparsely populated place?” or “How do you get input from residents who live in such rural area?”) and discuss innovative solutions (e.g., “To accommodate our vast population, we have subcommittees for our Network that meet on this schedule...”)

Principle Three: Quality and Rigor

Family Policy Council and Community Network work is high quality. And Family Policy Council education is designed and executed to reflect the brand. In addition, the education is focused and rigorous in order to ensure the greatest possible return on investment. Specifically:

1. Each event is designed to achieve specified goals and objectives. Every component of the conference, including marketing, speakers, and handouts is geared to the realization of those goals and objectives.
2. Each conference, or sometimes cluster of conferences, is developed as part of a broader strategic plan intended to improve the performance or capacity of the system as a whole. For example, events held throughout 2000 and 2001 were designed to improve the operations of Networks, while Partners Summits from 2002 to 2007 were designed to increase understanding of the antecedents to problem behaviors. In 2008 attention began to turn towards improving resilience.
3. Family Policy Council staff work hand-in-hand with conference faculty to ensure the highest quality presentations and materials, and to help faculty anticipate the questions participants will call on them to answer. Faculty are encouraged to stay throughout the conference and engage in conversation with learners at meals and during networking opportunities.

Principle Four: Outcome-Focus

By statute, the Family Policy Council family-community-state partnership is an outcome-focused enterprise. Education is managed and implemented consistent with this requirement. Specifically:

1. Transfer of training, the “real world” application of trained knowledge and skill, is built in to education events, materials and activities utilizing the methods best supported by research. These include distribution of handouts that learners can refer to, integrating organizational practices with education to ensure opportunities to apply new skills, and sustaining a culture of continuous learning throughout the organization.
2. Evaluating events in the context of established goals and objectives.

3. Utilizing training and education materials to support Networks on the rare occasions that they are sanctioned for compliance issues.

Importantly, a recent study of community capacity development (Longhi and Porter, 2008) identified changes in capacity in Washington communities over the past ten years. A non-scientific review of the findings revealed non-participation in Family Policy Council Education among those communities whose capacity was both low and unchanged during the period in question. This may suggest that low-capacity communities face especial barriers to participation in education or conversely, that participation in Family Policy Council education positively affects the development of community capacity. The literature on transfer of training, which is rigorously applied by Family Policy Council, supports the latter.

LEARNERS

Community Network Board members are intentionally diverse in educational background, life experience, vocational experience, socio-economic status, and other variables. By statute, each board has 23 members: 13 “non-fiduciaries”—who have no fiduciary interest in any social services, education, health, or justice organization receiving public dollars—and ten members who are professionals in these fields. The boards are responsible to partner with the professionals’ agencies, neighborhoods, business, the faith community, local government, Tribes and others in order to: 1) increase community capacity; 2) improve the responsiveness of child- and family-serving programs; 3) change the conditions that generate the seven problem behaviors; and 4) drive down the rates of the problem behaviors.

Youth, elders, extremely poor, and many other individuals who might otherwise be marginalized in public dialogue and policy making, have made significant contributions to the system over time, prompting innovation and transformation by sharing wisdom and insight unavailable to those with different vantage points. Fundamental respect for the wisdom of each person is a core value and operating principle of the Family Policy Council partnership.

Importantly, the law states: “It is not the intent of the legislature that health, social services or education professionals dominate community public health and safety networks, but rather that these professionals use their skills to lend support to parents and other citizens in expressing their values as parents and other citizens identify community needs and establish community priorities. To this end, the legislature intends full participation of parents and other citizens in community public health and safety networks. The intent is that local community values are reflected in the operations of the network” (RCW 70.190.060(1)). Therefore, when investing limited education resource, the priorities must be: 1) empowerment of local community residents who volunteer on behalf of children and families, and 2) addressing the topics, conditions and issues these citizen leaders prioritize as necessary to achieve the mandated outcomes.

At times, citizen priorities have favored professional education; that is, training for professionals in leading edge science with the potential, if applied, to transform education, social services and/or health systems. At other times, citizen leaders have favored education investments intended to strengthen their own knowledge, skills, abilities, and performance in their role as a Network member. Most

recently, citizen leaders have sought skills and tools they might master and apply to engage others in their community, particularly individuals facing difficult health, economic or cultural challenges; those who are homeless; or those living in places known as “dangerous” or “tough” neighborhoods.

It is important to emphasize that Community Network board members are volunteering when acting in this role. Volunteer education is a unique domain, distinct from human resources development, adult basic education and other adult learning specialties. Mundel and Schugurensky (2008) found that volunteers benefit from education programs, learning-by-doing, and self directed learning. The organization and the volunteer both benefit when these learning strategies are combined with opportunities for reflection. “We found there were many instances of formal and informal reflection. This mode of learning is seen as particularly important for community organizations.”

PART THREE:

FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

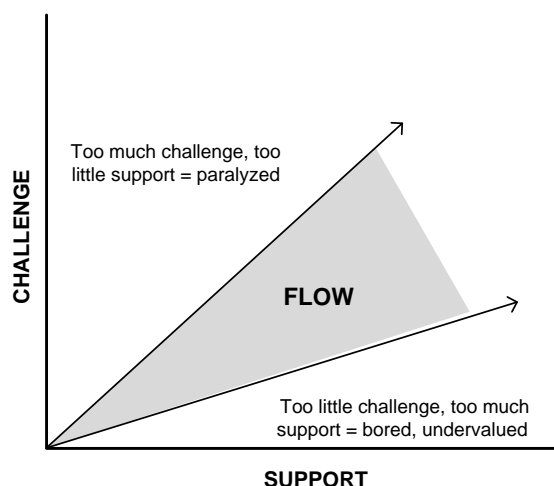
In 1999, the Family Policy Council undertook an assessment of its training and education investments to determine learning needs and to identify the strategies most likely to: 1) support the community of learners and 2) advance the organization's mission and strategic goals. It was determined that the Family Policy Council would be best served by adopting a set of principles from the field of adult education in order to guide long-term planning and education decision-making. They are: 1) Csikszentmihalyi's Challenge and Support; 2) Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle; and 3) constructivism.

CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT

The public policy challenge to Community Networks to: reconstruct social networks of support for children and families; improve the responsiveness of child- and family- serving systems; and reduce the rates of seven major social problems is likely unprecedented. While other states have moved to devolve authority to the local level, only Washington, with its populist history, has entrusted its citizens with such an ambitious constellation of authority, responsibility and problem behaviors.

Challenge plays a critical role in both adult learning and motivation. Therefore, Family Policy Council education draws heavily from Csikszentmihalyi (1990), who argues for a balance between challenge and support in order to maximize participation, motivation and learning. When challenge and support are well balanced, learners experience "flow," a state of motivation often characterized by perseverance, enthusiasm and loss of self-consciousness. Although the work is hard, learners in a state of flow rarely describe it that way; rather, the tasks are worthwhile or meaningful and the results are satisfying.

CSIKSZENTMIHALYI'S FLOW: *Social Conditions for Optimal Performance*



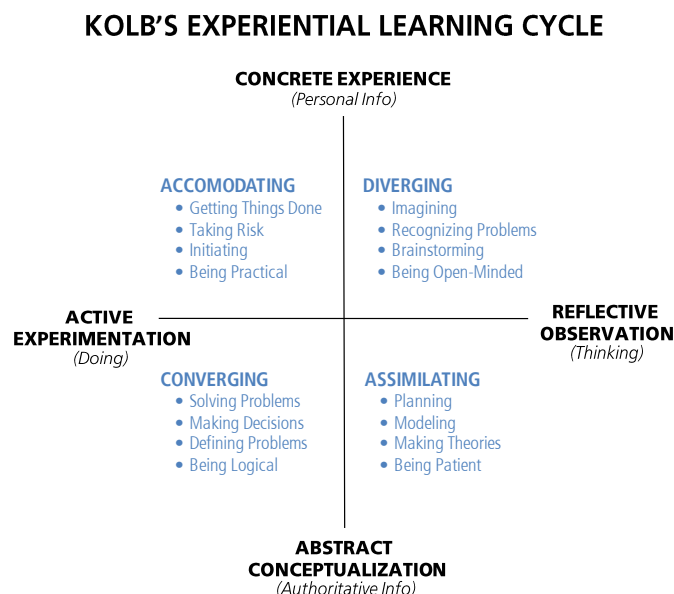
Challenges that are "too hard" do not motivate people; rather, exceeding the capacity of learners causes paralysis and disengagement. Working on a reasonable challenge with too little support also causes

disengagement: even if learners feel capable of completing the task, the absence of support implicitly conveys that the achievement will not be valued, and learners lose motivation. Likewise, adults are not motivated to spend precious time on tasks that do not honor their knowledge, wisdom and skills, so challenges that are “too easy” result in a dropping-out effect. Finally, support that exceeds what learners reasonably need to be successful causes learners to feel unnecessary—implicitly, whoever is organizing support already has the situation well in hand, rendering learner participation unnecessary and reducing motivation to participate (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The Family Policy Council’s continuous balancing of challenge and support results in a highly experiential learning system. On-going reflection on the needs of various partners results in a dynamic relationship between the education program and the business practice of the organization. For example, biennial reports filed by Networks in 1999 revealed substantial need for education programs focused on *Operations, Legal Obligations & Public Accountability*. The Family Policy Council focused education investment in this domain throughout 2000 and 2001. One module, on government procurement, was developed in partnership with the Employment Security Department, a member agency. Although the workshop is rarely repeated, the guidebook generated for the training continues to function as a policy manual and reference tool at the local level. Networks are accountable for appropriate procurement in established fiscal processes at the state and local level.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

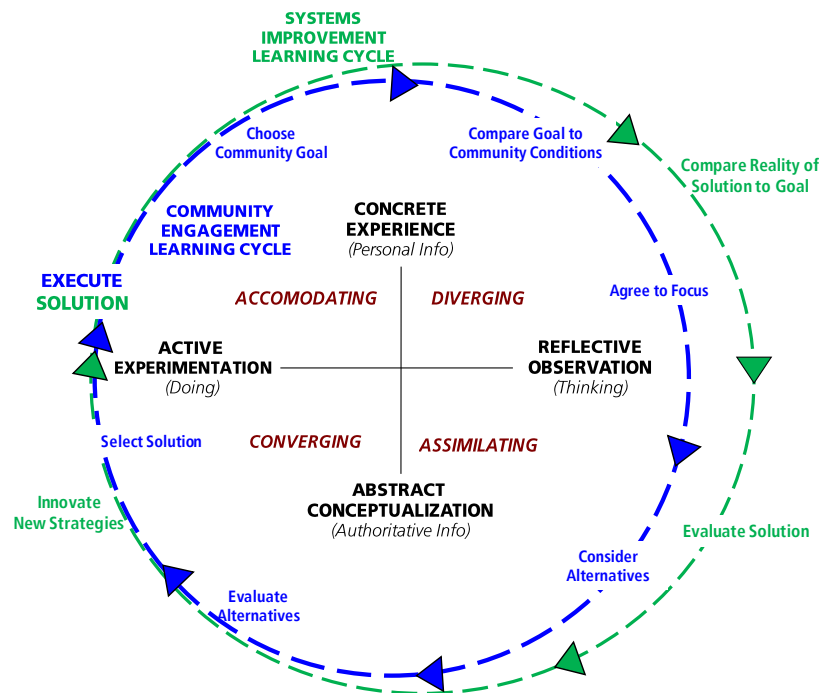
David Kolb (1984) offers a model for integrating experience, observation, authoritative information (e.g., data, scientific findings), and intentional actions or experiments in order to learn new concepts, generate new ideas, and/or solve tough problems. This model is an excellent fit for Family Policy Council as the planning, action and reporting of Community Networks are premised on noticing and learning from what is happening in the local community, generating community engagement, formulating strategy, and building community capacity in order to make transformative changes.



The Kolb model is intended for adults and has been adapted for use in organizational learning. The Family Policy Council has utilized Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to: design education events; shape content and learning activities; set expectations for and coach faculty; support Community Network members and partners in their efforts to teach others and extend learning at the local level; and guide community processes, such as planning and reporting in order to maximize results.

The Family Policy Council process of community learning may be conceptualized in this way:

COMMUNITY LEARNING CYCLES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF KOLB



CONSTRUCTIVISM

Statutory guidance on education is limited to RCW 70.190.100(2), which states "The Family Policy Council shall...develop a technical assistance and training program to assist communities in creating and developing community networks and comprehensive plans." The law is silent on content, methods and other education and training issues. However, statute provides contextual information on the purposes for the investment.

Importantly, the Family Policy Council and its affiliate Community Networks are directed to be outcome-focused, a standard articulated in definitions, duties and referenced legislation. The partnership is responsible to implement the Family Policy Principles (see for example, RCW 70.190.030(3)), which include outcome-based services.

Education theory suggests two ways to interact with such an outcome-based mandate. The first is to focus on discrete knowledge and skills that, when mastered, add up to the desired outcome. The second is to create the conditions that lead to achievement and innovation.

Focus on discrete knowledge and skills is typically delivered through behaviorist, mastery-based training. While this approach has significant value and has been employed by the Family Policy Council on topics such as contracts, Open Public Meetings, and procurement, it assumes that a body of knowledge is in existence. With a behaviorist approach, it is the job of the educator to break the information down into sequenced parts and “deliver” them in a useful order, and to continue such training until mastery is achieved.

This is nearly impossible in the Family Policy Council context, as:

1. The field has not sufficiently developed authoritative information on the problem behaviors and their solutions;
2. Each of the problem behaviors exists in its own field or domain and appropriate sequencing across fields is unknown;
3. It is the responsibility of all professionals in the Family Policy Council system, including the educators, to “lend support to parents and other residents in expressing their values,” and experience has shown that there are limits to authoritative delivery of information in this context;
4. Participation in Family Policy Council education is voluntary, just as participation in Network Boards is voluntary. It is virtually impossible to sequence and deliver to a level of mastery under such circumstances; and
5. The cost of a behaviorist approach—in terms of curriculum development, program planning, and participation by community members—is prohibitive.

Given organization-directed education, the alternative to a behaviorist approach is a constructivist approach. (In theory, other options are available, such as the humanist approach, but these are not generally utilized in the context of work place or organization-sponsored education). With a constructivist approach, it is the job of the educator to facilitate the sharing of critical information and to create conditions through which learners can co-create meaning.

This approach has striking similarity to a public health approach, which is central to the Family Policy Council mandate. In addition to being sensitive to the statutory requirements of the work, the advantages of the constructivist approach include:

1. All participants have the opportunity to contribute expertise of value to others;
2. Problems encountered in “the real world” can be used as teaching and learning tools for all;
3. Working together to co-create meaning helps to strengthen and professionalize a field (Brown and Duguid, 2000b);

4. Over time, working with a common framework of documents or body of information helps to establish identity for the field, which includes standards for performing work and best practices (Brown and Duguid, 2000b); and
5. This approach is the best known method for generating transformative change and innovation (Brown and Duguid, 2000b).

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION

Given the mandate and purposes of the Family Policy Council system and the philosophy of the organization, education investments should, when taken together, result in co-created knowledge and understanding that:

- Ensures quality work across the state;
- Is actionable;
- Creates cross-function identity and flexibility; and
- Fuels on-going innovation and rate reduction.

The education itself should:

- Align with and support the achievement of the partnership's strategic goals;
- Increase the capacity of communities to achieve desired results;
- Cultivate culture of learning that informs the development of programs and policies as well as the achievement of outcomes;
- Have long-term value or influence on the work by leveraging systems thinking and systems change; and
- Support innovations that result in desired outcomes.

PART FOUR:
THE EMERGING FIELD OF COMMUNITY NETWORK EDUCATION

The requirements of Chapter 70.190 RCW, taken together, generate variables significant to education planning, including:

- The principles and values that guide the family-community-state partnership;
- The scope of technical assistance and training to be provided;
- Standards for the operation and accountability of Community Networks;
- The seven major social problems to be addressed, each of which has a field or science of antecedents and best practice attached;
- A requirement to implement a public health approach;
- Structures to engage the public; and
- A unique pool of learners—“parents and other citizens” who are not professional service providers and who volunteer their time to improve child and family outcomes.

RCW 70.190.100(2) directs the Family Policy Council to “develop a technical assistance and training program;” therefore, the Family Policy Council has made a variety of education investments since Community Networks were authorized by the Legislature. These include one-time-only, intermittent and systematic programming, such as: a workshop series on how to form a Community Network and do necessary planning within the context of the law (1994-1996); contracting with a technical assistance broker to deliver services tailored to community needs (1996-2000); and the annual Family Policy Council Partners Summit (now in its sixteenth year).

Specifically, the Family Policy Council invests in education to “assist communities in creating and developing community networks and comprehensive plans” (RCW 70.190.100(2)); the legal definition of “comprehensive plan” helps to illustrate the complexities inherent in Community Network Education. It is: “a two year plan that examines available resources and unmet needs for a county or multicounty area, barriers that limit the effective use of resources, and a plan to address these issues that is broadly supported by local residents” (RCW 70.190.010(4)). Community Networks are required by contract to submit reports and comprehensive plans in the third quarter of each odd-numbered year.

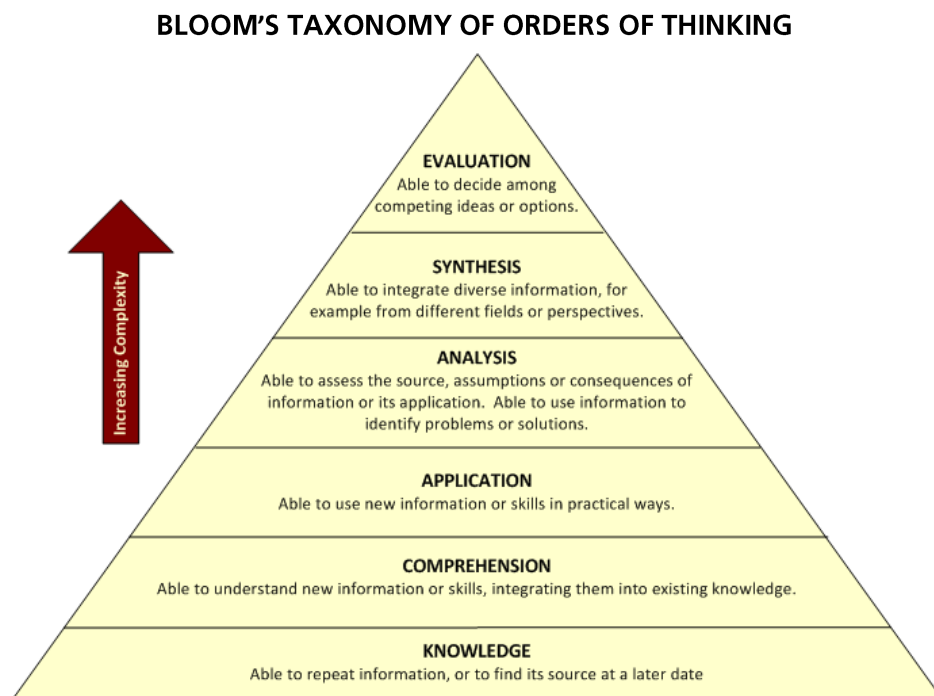
There are several methods or skill sets in the field to assess “available resource and unmet need,” for example Asset Mapping. But even the best application of an appropriate skill set does not, of itself, ensure broad support by local residents, which constitutes the more difficult training challenge inherent in the statutory mandate. To meet its responsibilities, the Family Policy Council must foster skills for engaging the public in developing plans as well as skills for broadening and/or strengthening community support for communally generated initiatives. This content—what needs to be learned—cannot be derived from the same field as needs assessment, and appears not reside in a single, specialized field. Political science, community organizing and organizational development each contribute content.

Experience has shown that the proficiencies required to achieve broad community support and to develop community capacity extend beyond the formal definition of training, and actually constitute a learning subsystem: the learning critical to achieving the goal spans content areas, and requires multiple skills be woven together over time. Because of the dynamics of this subsystem, the Family Policy Council balances being the educator of communities and being the educator of Community Networks partners who, in turn, educate community. Importantly, Network volunteers are themselves broadly experienced and extremely knowledgeable.

With time and ever-deepening understanding of community learning needs, it became clear that Community Network Education constitutes its own specialty field or domain, a field which intentionally synthesizes content from disparate sources, including the statute, existing fields of knowledge, experience, and intentional experimentation with new ways of conducting child- and family-serving programs.

THE FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL COMMUNITY LEARNING TAXONOMY

A taxonomy allows “large amounts of information to be collapsed into more convenient categories that would be easier to process, store and comprehend” (Russ-Eft, 2002). All the components are essential, and they are arranged to represent increasing complexity. A taxonomy “can be created empirically” (Russ-Eft, 2002); the Family Policy Council Community Education Taxonomy is based, in part, on the Council’s experience in assessing Community Network education needs, delivering education programs, and monitoring community progress on key performance indicators. In addition, a taxonomy may be based on existing research or theoretical constructs (Russ-Eft, 2002); the Family Policy Council Taxonomy is significantly influenced by Bloom’s Taxonomy, a tool used in both K-12 and adult education to describe the development of thinking skills.



The highest orders of thinking involve comparing, contrasting and integrating diverse bodies of knowledge, while middle-order thinking requires breaking down problems and applying known solutions or models. Lower-order thinking involves the acquisition of information. It is important to note that the lower levels must be mastered if one is to be effective at the highest order: it would be impossible to make a sound judgment between two options (evaluation) in the absence of understanding the options (comprehension), their implementation (application), and the way they might fit with existing circumstances (analysis) or planned initiatives (synthesis).

Upon analyzing the demands on Networks, it became clear that the requisite knowledge and skills are interrelated, requiring higher orders of thinking as the community moves towards mastery and effectiveness. Therefore the Family Policy Council hypothesized that key knowledge and skills in Community Network Education ought to be viewed taxonomically.

FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL COMMUNITY LEARNING TAXONOMY



Taken together, the knowledge and skills represented in the Family Policy Council Community Learning Taxonomy ensure the ability of Community Networks to: 1) assess needs and barriers; 2) engage community; and 3) take actions that result in reduction of the rates of complex social problems.

KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS OF THE COMMUNITY LEARNING TAXONOMY

Each of the domains of knowledge in the Family Policy Council Community Education Taxonomy is essential to the success of the Community Network. In addition, the domains represent increasingly complex thinking:

Operations, Legal Obligations & Public Accountability represents the body of knowledge related to the legal operation of the Network. This is an application level domain.

Volunteer & Board Management represents the skill sets necessary to recruit and retain volunteer board members and to engage partners in work prioritized by the Network. This is an application and analysis level domain.

Community Collaboration represents a growing body of knowledge essential to engaging partners, generating a common focus and expanding community leadership in order to achieve commonly defined priorities. This is an analysis, synthesis and evaluation level domain.

Problem Behaviors, Antecedents & Known Practice represents the system's growing understanding of the seven problem behaviors, including leading edge science that describes the developmental biological and neurobiological conditions leading to and resulting from the problem behaviors. It includes the skills related to community decision making about these issues, for example community decisions to pilot strategies that, if successful, would bring leading bench science into social services and drive rates down. This is an analysis, synthesis and evaluation level domain.

Civic Engagement & Public Policy represents the body of knowledge and skills required to: foster public will to act on the seven problem behaviors and the community conditions that generate them; make policy recommendations on these issues to local government, the Family Policy Council and the Legislature; and implement public policy decisions related to the priorities of the Network. This is an analysis, synthesis and evaluation level domain.

Public Health represents not only knowledge of the science of public health, but the skills for using surveillance data in decision making, and for leveraging social, cultural, political, economic and physical conditions that constitute the macro- and micro-determinants of health in the community. This is an analysis, synthesis and evaluation level domain.

Data Analysis represents the skills necessary to select relevant indicators, gather data, understand what the data mean, and represent the data effectively so that a broad range of citizens and partners may act effectively. This is an application, analysis, and evaluation level domain.

Outcomes & Evaluation represents the field of managing for results, a complex and emerging model for using data to achieve continuous improvement. This is an analysis, synthesis and evaluation level domain, with an additional twist: the analysis, synthesis and evaluation occur in iterations that must be planned for.

Systems Thinking represents the management science associated with solving complex problem, and requires knowledge of the field as well as the personal mastery to work from the Systems perspectives; for example, by managing delays (inevitable in change efforts) by refraining from making reactive investments in "fixes that fail." Although learners will necessarily begin at an application level, when fully operationalized, this is a synthesis and evaluation-plus domain.

Review of Community Efforts represents the domain of knowledge and practice related to RCW 70.190.110, which directs Community Networks and the Family Policy Council to evaluate child and

family serving programs and recommend to the Legislature changes that are likely to: 1) improve the responsiveness of those systems and 2) improve child and family outcomes, and in addition, to recommend decategorization of funding where feasible. Typically, recommended changes are implemented via pilots managed by the Community Network and its on-the-ground partners. Increasingly, pilots are being approved by the Legislature with the stipulation that the proposing Network recruit 2-5 additional communities to co-pilot with them. This is an evaluation level domain, requiring true mastery of the other domains. (Mastery of the problem behaviors may be focused on one or two of the problem behaviors relevant to the Review).

Importantly, the majority of the community learning domains require not only higher order thinking, but sophisticated social and political judgment as well, which is difficult to express in the context of a learning taxonomy.

It would be next-to-impossible for any one individual to achieve mastery of all ten domains in the Family Policy Council Learning Taxonomy much less to master these domains and infuse consistently the social and political intelligences needed to be effective. Therefore the system of technical assistance, training and education must be geared towards the development of collective wisdom, where multiple partners form a knowledge ecology (see Brown and Duguid, 2000b) that continuously supports and interacts with change efforts.

The knowledge ecology approach acknowledges the importance of each individual to the community's learning, effective action and innovation. Importantly, distributing responsibility for learning and knowing across many community members and partners increases the diversity of individuals participating in the knowledge ecology, as well as the education and technical assistance programs.

PART FIVE:

EDUCATION METHODS: BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE ECOLOGY

When Chapter 70.190 RCW was passed, it was assumed that Family Policy Council training and technical assistance would come from the State in order to inform communities and support their achievement of the primary objectives of the system: re-establishing community networks of support for children and families; improving the responsiveness of child- and family-serving systems; and reducing the rates of major social problems. And in the beginning, there was direct instruction to be done on topics such as legal requirements, strategic planning, asset mapping and the like. But because state government and local communities have unique but overlapping roles in solving difficult and expensive social problems, the State could not credibly serve as expert on many issues essential to Community Networks' development. Once Community Networks were established and operating, the "State as expert" approach was obsolete, representing only a tiny portion of what was useful and needed in order to achieve the goals of the system.

In fact, expertise is rare on many of the questions facing Networks. Definitive knowledge is scarce when it comes to preventing certain of the problem behaviors, interrupting intergenerational cycles, and driving down rates across the population as a whole. In addition, communities are required to address clusters of problem behaviors, which they select based on local data and resident input; for example, child abuse, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Authoritative information on how to reduce the rates of multiple problem behaviors is even more limited.

"The answer" for reducing the rates of costly social problems is not yet known. If theory, practice or policy had previously developed solutions that radically reduce rates, the public would have insisted on implementation and the work would be done.

But it is not. Instead, to achieve its statutory mandates, the Family Policy Council and its education program must foster on-going learning, experimentation and innovation.

WHAT IS INNOVATION?

While Webster's defines innovation as, "the act of innovating [to start or introduce something new: be creative]," the field of organizational development is more precise, distinguishing between an invention or idea and innovation, "which is the implementation of invention" (Brown and Duguid, 2000b).

"Invention produces new ideas. It requires innovation *and organizational coordination* to turn these ideas into products and processes" (Brown and Duguid, 2000b). In fact, when ideas are substantially different from established practice, very complex, or difficult for experienced, successful people to imagine, they may require innovations in an array of organizational functions (e.g., accounting, information services, evaluation) in order to be implemented. For example, many social service providers have been stymied by new ideas for client services: confidentiality and data sharing innovations are essential before such recommendations can be implemented.

KNOWLEDGE ECOLOGY

The phenomenon of cross-function innovations is known as complementary innovation, and while it may be achieved within the confines of a single organization, it is more likely to be fostered by a knowledge ecology. Wikipedia defines knowledge ecology as “a complex adaptive system akin to a natural ecosystem.” Brown and Duguid (2000b) refer to “dense, cross-hatched relationships of practices and processes...” where “both invention and an innovation develop rapidly together, turbocharged by feedback loops that run both within and between firms.”

The Social Life of Information (Brown and Duguid, 2000b) makes a strong case that knowledge ecologies are most likely to be geographically bounded. Think Silicon Valley and its place in information technology and computing, Hollywood and its place in film and television, New York or Paris and their place in fashion. In fact, studies dating back to England’s Industrial Revolution document the emergence of particular places as the center of particular industries. In addition to innovation, within a knowledge ecology there emerge:

- “Shared, high-level understanding of the demands and possibilities of” the innovation;
- A constant market for skills, which draws qualified workers and new businesses to the area; and
- Development of subsidiary trades needed to support the dominant enterprise (Brown and Duguid, 2000b).

In some cases, the knowledge ecology emerges because of the presence of a natural resource, such as water or coal. But in a knowledge and service based economy, it increasingly occurs because organizations within close physical proximity to one another are able to offer timely, complementary innovation that launches transformative ideas into products and processes. Proximity fosters communities of practice, results in affiliations such as professional associations among practitioners so that information is shared formally and informally, and leads to the establishment of new firms or organizations that fulfill the “niches” required for critical complementary innovation.

It appears that the patient development of Community Networks, along with the insight, capacity and organizational structure of the Family Policy, has produced a vibrant knowledge ecology in Washington. This State has emerged as the nation’s center for innovating improved public health and reduced rates of child abuse and neglect, dropping out of school, youth violence and other major social problems.

THE CASE FOR THE FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP AS A KNOWLEDGE ECOLOGY

The core mission of Community Networks is innovation: transformative change in both community conditions that produce problem behaviors and the practices of child- and family-serving systems are required. Conscious efforts at innovation, particularly in new fields, often generate a geographically bounded knowledge ecology.

Importantly, RCW 70.190.100(1) specifies that Community Public Health and Safety Networks be defined primarily by geography, stating; “There is a presumption that no county may be divided between two or more community networks and no network shall have fewer than forty thousand population. When approving multicounty networks, considering dividing a county between networks, or

creating a network with a population of less than forty thousand, the council must consider: (a) Common economic, geographic, and social interests; (b) historical and existing shared governance; and (c) the size and location of the population centers. Individuals and groups within any area shall be given ample opportunity to propose network boundaries in a manner designed to assure full consideration of their expressed wishes.”

The statute further directs both Community Network board members and the Family Policy Council to support the cultural norms and values of each community, and to support “parents and other residents” of the community in expressing their priorities and ideas. This has the effect of creating both a common core of innovation to reduce problem behaviors as well complementary innovations resulting from community efforts to act on local culture, needs, and goals.

Experience has shown that tailoring programs to communities’ expressed needs results in prolific development of niches. For example, the Walla Walla County Community Network and Whatcom County Family and Community Network have become known for their neighborhood organizing approach while the Kitsap County Commission on Children and Youth has become known for Developmental Assets and the Kittitas, San Juan and Wahkiakum County Community Networks have become known for integrating substance abuse, juvenile justice, readiness to learn and other advisory and planning functions devolved to the local level.

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE ECOLOGY TO THE FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP

It is nearly impossible for any one individual to achieve mastery of all ten domains in the Family Policy Council Learning Taxonomy. Communities must build a local network of knowledge and wisdom, where individuals contribute expertise at key moments and help to move the system forward. This kind of collective intelligence is set in the context of a mission that requires an ecological approach: the Family Policy Council is required by statute to utilize public health; that is, changing outcomes at the population level by extending far beyond altering the social, cultural, attitudinal, economic and physical conditions that produce or prevent the problems to begin with. Therefore, a knowledge ecology has a great deal of inherent value.

The ecological approach specifically:

- Fosters a form of identity building that provides a platform for innovative public policy;
- Supports and advances a continuous learning environment necessary to complex problem solving; and
- Facilitates transfer of training, the driver for return on education investment.

IDENTITY BUILDING IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS KNOWLEDGE ECOLOGY

Members of Community Networks are functioning as volunteers when they come to the board table. And yet, most have a professional life; 10 of the 23 are specifically attached to child- and family-serving systems such as schools and child welfare. The others may work in the private sector, in the faith community, or at non-profit organizations in the community. The Legislature believed that such a cross-

functional team, given sufficient legal authority, would “improve the responsiveness of services for children and families at risk” (RCW 70.190.005). In fact, the structure of Networks has engendered productive collaboration on extremely difficult problems; however, the diverse professions of board members can create an educational Tower of Babel—dozens of technical and professional languages and no common meaning. As Brown and Duguid (2000) argue: “To collaborate around shared information you first have to develop a shared framework for interpretation.”

Family Policy Council Community Learning is designed to foster such a framework—a common identity among volunteers and partners—so that diverse individuals step up to the work of the Community Network—whether as direct contributors or as resources in the knowledge ecology—with the philosophical, legal and practical underpinnings of the family-community-state partnership in place. “Learning needs to be understood in relation to the development of human identity. In learning to be, in becoming a member of a community of practice, an individual is developing a social identity. In turn, the identity under development shapes what that person comes to know, how he or she assimilates knowledge and information. So, even when people are *learning about*, in Bruner’s terms, the identity they are developing determines what they pay attention to and what they learn. What people learn about then, is always refracted through who they are and what they are learning to be” (Brown and Duguid, 2000).

LEADING-EDGE SCIENCE AS A FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTITY

Motivated largely by the diversity of learners in the system, the Family Policy Council began to infuse leading-edge science into the education program in 2002, bringing brain researchers Martin Teicher, MD, Ph.D. and Bruce Perry, MD to the annual Partners Summit. Introducing physical science with broad implications for human services prompted on-going dialogue on the future of the field.

By 2005 Vincent Felitti, MD, and Robert Anda, MD, MPH, co-principle investigators of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, joined Dr. Teicher in leading Family Policy Council education programs. When combined, their research captured the imagination of communities and professionals alike, generating state- and local-level initiatives to learn, change policy, and improve practice.

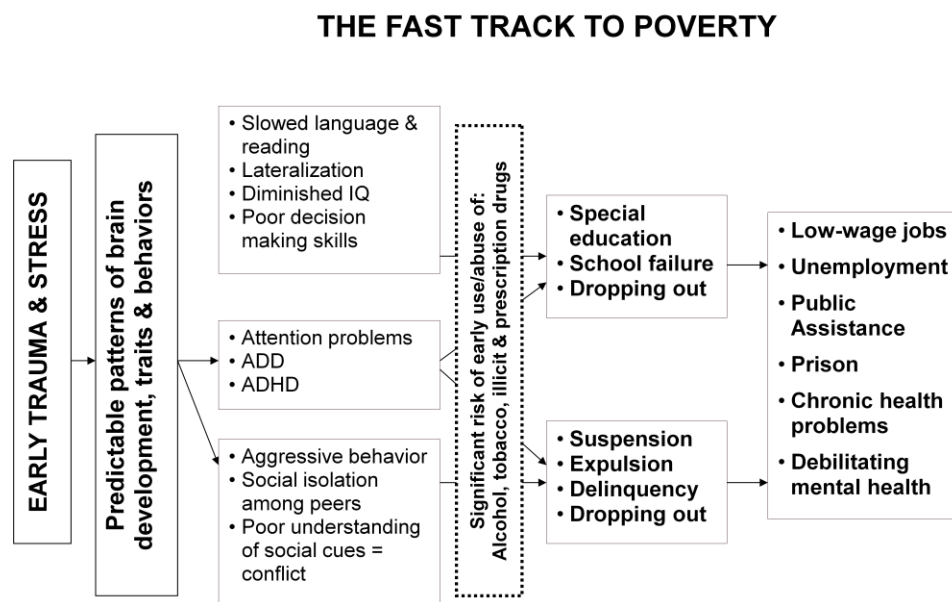
The ACE Study is a public health study of over 17,400 individuals that measures the lifelong physical, mental and behavioral health effects of nine childhood experiences across the population. The **ACE Score** is the number of types of adverse childhood experiences reported, not the number of instances in a single category, and the scientists found that the ACE Score determines health outcomes across the population as a whole. Brain research is beginning to illuminate the biological reasons for this pattern of outcomes: early life stressors shape the cellular, chemical and electrical systems of the brain. The effects of early maltreatment are especially pronounced in areas of the brain responsible for emotional regulation, calming, mental health, aggression and attention, helping to explain both behavioral and intergenerational effects of adverse childhood experience.

VALUE ADD

It is not the purpose of Family Policy Council Education to identify individuals' ACEs or to present the group as in terms of its overall ACE Score. Rather, the purpose is to introduce information that cuts across the seven problem behaviors that all Networks address, and *to construct the shared framework for interpretation* as described by Brown and Duguid.

The Family Policy Council family-community-state partnership has found this framework to be helpful and integrative, adding both complexity (ACEs interact and pile up over time) and simplicity (ACEs have predictable lifelong physical, mental and behavioral health outcomes) to the task of driving down rates of problem behaviors. The identity helps to support an effective call to action.

The most current understanding of the system's shared understanding may be summarized with this chart:



After four years of concerted effort to build common understanding and shared identity using this science, it is not uncommon to visit a community in Washington and hear, “We speak ACEs here.” Innovations include:

- The Family Policy Council Systems Dynamics Model, which has the capacity to inform program investments by modeling the population effects of various interventions over a 60-year period.
- Review of Community Efforts examining the role of Adverse Childhood Experiences in juvenile court and the effectiveness of juvenile rehabilitation programming.
- Community education programs, such as a series called *Hurt to Hope*, that have generated public will for policy initiatives like Compassionate Schools.
- The *High Cost of Adverse Childhood Experiences*, a PowerPoint presentation on brain research, ACEs and resiliency that has been delivered to over 5,000 Washingtonians. Forty Community

Network volunteers have been trained to do this talk and have delivered it to schools, hospitals, and elsewhere.

- White papers in mental health prevention and K-12 education.

It is important to note that Family Policy Council staff were the drivers of only a few items on this list. The others resulted from initiatives by Community Network board members, community partners, and/or member agency staff who participated in Family Policy Council education designed to foster a shared interpretive framework for addressing the problem behaviors.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The field of organizational development would suggest that continuous learning adds enough value to justify its implementation. But setting those merits aside, the Family Policy Council partnership faces conditions that necessitate this approach. For example, it is the charter of Community Networks to continuously expand community leadership in order to change local conditions and drive down the rates of child abuse and neglect, youth violence and other major social problems. In addition to traditional and collaborative activities, Networks reach out to and engage individuals and groups who receive social and health services and those who have no voice, for example because of their socio-economic, mental health, educational, legal or other status. The Family Policy Council provides training in the ten Community Learning domains in order to support this continuously expanding circle of leaders.

In addition, the Council itself consists of elected and appointed officials whose tenures are typically tied to relatively short election cycles. Turnover among the statewide leadership requires mechanisms for two-way learning: the leaders must be brought up to speed on the mission and capacity of the system, and the leaders must have the opportunity to direct a portion of the work of the partnership in order to achieve key goals during their term on the Council.

Perhaps most importantly, the work itself absolutely necessitates continuous learning. The answers for slashing the rates of child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, teen pregnancy and other major social problems have not yet been innovated. Scientific understanding of the inter-relationships among the seven problem behaviors is just beginning to emerge. And yet, children cannot wait. It is important to “push the envelope,” try new things based on the science, and rigorously document and assess the outcomes.

Knowledge ecology is one method for facilitating continuous learning. The feedback loops within and between the organizations within the ecology result in “turbocharged” and concurrent invention and innovation. Other methods include integrating learning with business practices, and fostering an organizational culture that values learning. Importantly, a continuous learning culture is the number one ingredient that an organization can contribute to transfer of training by individual learners within the system (Cromwell and Kolb, 2004).

TRANSFER OF TRAINING

Transfer of training “involves the generalization of learned material to the job and the maintenance of trained skills over a period of time...Transfer of training is also considered to be the primary leverage point by which training can influence of organizational-level outcomes” (Gaudine and Saks, 2004). In short, it is the ability of individuals to transfer what they have learned to situations where the learning is applicable. Where the subject matter or skills are complex, transfer may also refer to problem solving capacity (Foley, 2006) and innovation (Brown and Duguid, 2000).

When dollars are short and the ability to reach all learners is limited—primary conditions when it comes to Community Network Education—attention to transfer is critical to optimize the return of all education investments. Recognizing the known characteristics of participating learners as well as the complexities of the work, the Family Policy Council has developed three key business practices that also serve as the support structure for transfer of training:

1. Continuous learning environment as previously discussed (Cromwell and Kolb, 2004);
2. Error management training (Russ-Eft, 2002); and
3. Opportunities for application (Gaudine and Saks, 2004).

ERROR MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Although most individuals expect to make mistakes as they master a new task, most training is, in fact, structured to prevent mistakes and sometimes punishes learners for getting it wrong. “From a psychological perspective, however, errors make it possible to learn” (Keith and Frese, 2005). What’s more, explicit guidance on learning from errors enhances transfer and improves problem solving skills. Error management takes a different tack, “(a) focusing trainees on the beneficial aspects of error for learning, (b) identifying the information that such errors can provide, and (c) helping trainees determine what caused and error and how it can be avoided in the future” (Russ-Eft, 2002). Error management strategies result in:

- Increased motivation to perform when facing obstacles (Russ-Eft, 2002);
- A blurred line between training and on-the-job learning so that learning is continuous and not time-bound (Burke and Hutchens, 2008);
- Greater potential to adapt and generate “a solution to a completely new problem” (Keith and Frese, 2005); and
- Improvements in emotion control or metacognitive performance (Keith and Frese, 2005).

Although no Family Policy Council education program has offered direct instruction on error management, these strategies are well established in the business processes of the organization. For example, it is the practice of the Family Policy Council to promote honesty regarding local challenges and errors; Community Networks are required to report what they have learned each biennium—even when that learning results from an error—and to document how the strategy or tactics of the Network will change as a result. A recent study (Longhi and Porter, 2008) found this type of learning to be

critical to the development of community capacity and highly correlated to reducing rates of problem behaviors.

Importantly, an error management approach helps to foster self-regulation, specifically emotion control and metacognition during the learning process and beyond. “Failures in emotion control result in impaired learning and performance, because negative emotions divert attention to the self and away from the task at hand” (Keith and Frese, 2005). Metacognition is “particularly useful in learning environments that provide little external structure or guidance” (Keith and Frese, 2005).

Martin Teicher’s brain research indicates that individuals who have experienced adverse childhood experiences at key developmental periods are more likely to face challenges with self-regulation, and Community Networks are designed to engage individuals who have had such experiences. Volunteers who have experienced adverse childhood experience resulting in diminished self-regulation are particularly empowered by this approach, which is embedded in both education and business functions.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPLICATION: INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND BUSINESS PRACTICE

Although it is tempting to think of training and education as separate from day-to-day operations, learning investments are made in order move Networks through the Community Learning Taxonomy, increase community capacity, and improve outcomes related to the mission of the Family Policy Council partnership. Transfer is the intended outcome of education investment. And transfer is dependent upon opportunities to practice.

The truth is: adults are busy and over-taxed. As a rule, we forget what we do not need to know. When day-to-day work calls on the learner to apply new ideas and skills, they are not forgotten. Not surprisingly, many studies have identified opportunities to apply information as key to transfer. And at least one study (Burke and Hutchens, 2008) identified on-the job application as a best practice in the public sector.

In-person education is very limited in the Family Policy Council system. There are but four opportunities to learn together each year and one of these is dedicated to public policy issues, civic engagement and legislative activities (Day in Olympia). At most, a Network staff person or board member will spend seven days a year engaged in formal, organized education. Therefore, application is built into business practices. For example:

- Materials developed for the learning environment are subsequently included in instructions for planning, data analysis and reporting;
- Materials developed for the learning environment provide the framework for self assessment, local policy guides, and other tools;
- Technical assistance providers will coach local Networks to consider research and science presented at conferences in the development of their statements of work and theories of change;

- Community Networks utilize information from Family Policy Council education in formulating Review of Community Efforts.

This level of integration requires cross-function planning by the Family Policy Council staff team and continuous cross-checking between team members. Education programs are sometimes developed when a staff member discovers the need for a particular tool among Community Networks.

BALANCE AND THE KNOWLEDGE ECOLOGY

Knowledge ecology is a complex phenomenon that requires a balance between self-organization and organizational controls. On the one hand, extra-bureaucratic innovation “keeps exploration safe from those organizational antibodies that flock to protect the corporate body from invasions of the new.” On the other hand, “insight, capacity and organizational commitments” are necessary to move even the best ideas from inception to product (Brown and Duguid, 2000b).

The Family Policy Council itself is designed to perform this balancing function, for example, by connecting complementary innovations across the system. This approach has many advantages, including:

- Mediating the effects of failure. While failure may be hard on an individual organization within the ecology, “it too may be beneficial for the ecology as a whole, providing useful insight” into what works and what is possible.
- Organizations that “feed into also feed off the ecology...reciprocity is important in the region.”
- Achieving economies of scale on complex problems.
- Advantage is cumulative. As the knowledge ecology becomes more dominant or well-known, investments to that place increase, thereby increasing the advantage and the capacity of the region.

Recent research on the capacity building successes of the Family Policy Council system is, at the time of this writing, generating substantial philanthropic interest in investment in the system and the system’s continued learning.

PART SIX:

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 70.190 RCW is unique in that it authorizes communities to form Community Networks, but does not direct their specific activities. Rather, the statute functions as a master plan of authority, incentives and principles intended to maximize local flexibility as well as focused action that gets results. For example, Networks are responsible to develop comprehensive plans each biennium that “examine available resources and unmet needs for a county or multicounty area, barriers that limit the effective use of resources, and a plan to address these issues that is broadly supported by local residents” (RCW 70.190.010(4)). Given diversity among communities with respect to resources, needs, barriers and cultural norms, it would be implausible to impose uniformity among Washington’s communities. It would also violate the intent of the law.

Instead, to ensure steady progress across the State, the Family Policy Council and Community Networks focus concern on developing community capacity. Webster’s defines capacity as “the ability to do something,” and initially, the education program worked to expand each Network’s ability to engage community, plan and execute activities logically connected to reducing rates, and measure the results of investments. This took the form of direct instruction on asset mapping and other discrete skills, peer-to-peer sharing on local community initiatives, and on-going instruction and technical assistance on outcomes measurement.

Today, “creating and developing Community Networks” is broadly understood as progression through the domains of the **Family Policy Council Community Learning Taxonomy**:



A recent study of Washington communities with and without Community Networks (Longhi and Porter, 2008) identified four key components of community capacity building (shared community focus;

community learning and improvement; local leadership development; and shared responsibility for results), and found:

1. Significant overlap between the criteria used by Family Policy Council to measure performance and key elements of community capacity identified in relevant literature;
2. A curvilinear relationship between improving community capacity scores on the performance index and reducing the rates of multiple problem behaviors; and
3. A correlation of .82 between increased scores on the index and reduced rates of problem behaviors.

EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Community capacity development is a primary organizational goal of the Family Policy Council, and education is vital to its achievement. The education program supports the development of community capacity to the extent that:

- Programs advance proficiency among communities in the Community Learning domains that foster successful capacity building (particularly community collaboration, civic engagement, data analysis and outcomes and evaluation);
- Education advances the increasingly sophisticated and effective application of Community Learning domains as they relate to the tasks of community capacity development;
- There are programmed opportunities to build a common identity and practice around key functions related to community capacity development;
- There are programmed opportunities for problem solving; and
- Increasing numbers of individuals, organizations and communities are included and given meaningful opportunity to achieve proficiencies which they can in turn contribute at the community level.

Although community capacity development is complex and involves education and non-education components, it is useful to understand the relationship of the Community Learning domains to meeting community capacity expectations.

Shared Community Focus represents the body of knowledge, skills and activities necessary to establish common ground or shared focus for activity, to build broad support among community residents for the focus area, to reach an agreed-upon community strategy to act on the focus area, and to establish a process for measuring the effectiveness of that strategy. To achieve proficiency in *shared community focus* requires collective expertise in five Family Policy Council Community Learning domains:

1. *Community collaboration*—essential to bringing residents together and fostering contribution by partners;
2. *Problem behaviors, antecedents and known practice*—essential to identifying appropriate areas for focus, and generating support for a particular course of action;

3. *Public health*—essential to identifying community-based strategies likely to change the determinants of health and as a foundation for selecting and tracking relevant indicator data;
4. *Data analysis*—essential to selecting a focus (identifying what's important here) and for understanding the effects of community action over time; and
5. *Outcomes and evaluation*—because outcomes serve as guideposts by giving feedback on what works and what doesn't, outcomes and evaluation is essential for sustaining community focus and support over time.

Community Learning and Improvement represents the body of knowledge and skills necessary to situate a community's activities within the local theory of change as well as relevant science and practice. It includes the ability to track data, to understand from that data what is happening in the community, and to infer which next steps are likely to yield further results. To achieve proficiency in *community learning and improvement* requires collective expertise in five Family Policy Council Community Learning domains:

1. *Problem behaviors, antecedents and known practice*—essential to focusing learning and improvement, knowledge of the problem behaviors informs the theory of change and serves as a foundation for evaluating potential activities, making corrections when efforts do not turn out as expected, and for innovation;
2. *Civic engagement and public policy*—essential to assessing what is (and importantly, is not) possible within the community given resources, past efforts, barriers and opportunities, and to identifying stakeholders whose participation is essential to success;
3. *Public health*—essential to understanding the dynamics of problem behaviors and the leverage points where action can make a difference, and to tracking relevant indicator data;
4. *Data analysis*—because data is a primary unit of feedback, data analysis is critical to understanding what is happening in the community, identifying what adaptations need to be made within a strategy and when/if new efforts should be attempted; and
5. *Outcomes and evaluation*—is the essential tool for managing for results, and therefore is essential to learning about the specific community and its efforts over time about.

For communities whose strategies include systems change, proficiency in systems thinking and review of community efforts domains is also necessary.

Local Leadership Development represents the body of knowledge and skills to: engage increasing numbers of individuals and organizations in efforts to reduce the rates of problem behaviors; collaborate effectively; engage community in strategic efforts; and to generate broad support for communally planned initiatives. To achieve proficiency in *local leadership development* requires collective expertise in three Family Policy Council Community Learning domains:

1. *Community collaboration*—essential to the process of engaging increasing numbers of residents and finding suitable roles for their participation;

2. *Problem behaviors, antecedents and known practice*—essential to focusing community engagement on the issues related to Chapter 70.190 RCW; and
3. *Civic engagement and public policy*—essential to empowering residents who become involved in Network efforts, and to supporting the direction resident leaders embrace.

Shared Responsibility for Results represents the body of knowledge and skills necessary for identifying and tracking indicators of problem behaviors, working collaboratively to gather and interpret data, and adjusting future activities within the context of the data. To achieve proficiency in *shared responsibility for results* requires collective expertise in four Family Policy Council Community Learning domains:

1. *Civic engagement and public policy*—because taking shared responsibility for results is an act of public will, it is essential to develop and draw on skills in this area ;
2. *Public health*—essential to identifying indicators and available data sets and to understanding the role of surveillance data in taking action to improve the public’s health;
3. *Data analysis*—essential to representing the data for the community and helping all involved partners to understand its meaning, significance and implications; and
4. *Outcomes and evaluation*—essential for planning next steps and building public will to take them.

For communities whose strategies include systems change, proficiency in systems thinking and review of community efforts domains is also necessary.

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

Developing leadership, both increasing the quantity of partners willing to help at this time, and improving the quality of their skill, is critical to capacity. Supporting leaders with education, tools and staffing is a core Family Policy Council function. Balancing challenge and support, developing a field and fostering identity are important tools in this effort.

Leadership support typically follows a pattern:

- Complex questions regarding conditions in the field bubble up and are informed by leaders throughout the family-community-state partnership;
- Staff reviews the literature and interview key leaders in the field to determine what is known and what might be surmised from what is known;
- Dialogue—formal and informal—is convened to discuss implications and possibilities;
- Staff develops products such as briefing papers or education programs;
- As understanding begins to percolate through system: 1) communities pilot and report on new strategies, and 2) Family Policy Council members and staff begin to inform policy groups (e.g., SPF-SIG, the Mental Health Transformation Grant, Children of Incarcerated Parents Workgroup);

- Policy, program and system changes emerge.

For example, in early 2005, a community with a significant population of Vietnam Era veterans posed questions related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disruptions in their community as Operation Desert Storm (Iraq) and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) unfolded, and the possibility of intergenerational transmission of traumatic stress. Education staff identified several resources and began to work with the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the National Center on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the US Department of Defense, and others. Twenty-eight percent of Washingtonians serve in the military (including National Guard), are their immediate family members, or are veterans.

The resulting product, *Welcome Home: How to Make a Difference in the Lives of Returning War Zone Veterans* has helped communities throughout Washington State and the nation to support returning war zone veterans—particularly National Guardsmen and “wounded warriors” returning to civilian communities—and to prevent the onset of PTSD. James Munroe, Ed.D., Clinical Director of the VA PTSD Clinic in Boston says: “I am very impressed with the Washington State Family Policy Council plan for soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. The focus on prevention of readjustment problems by enlisting community networks will go a long way for those who have served in the war zone. The plan emphasizes the importance of the soldiers’ families as the main support system, and the need to support those families. It is the families of soldiers that bear many of the burdens of war. The plan also provides unique practical ideas on how the larger community can help in creating the kind of support soldiers deserve. This is a well thought out plan for a progressive approach to the needs of soldiers and their families.”

At the time of this writing, Survivor Corps, the international non-profit that began as Princess Diana’s Landmine Survivors’ Network, is using *Welcome Home* as a framework to engage 5,000 American cities in creating the conditions that will help war zone veterans return to healthy, happy and productive lives at a time when nearly one-third are experiencing mental health disorders, suicide or substance abuse. And in Washington State distribution of *Welcome Home* and training to support it, including a 2005 Symposium co-sponsored by the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs, have resulted in federally funded research to support children of deployed military personnel and returning war zone veterans as well as community-level initiatives.

PART SEVEN:
EDUCATION PRIORITIES: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2009-2014

As of this writing, the Family Policy Council faces a 50% reduction in its State funding for the period 2009-2011; this reduction reflects an international economic downturn that is fueling a pattern of decreased spending by consumers, severely depressed housing markets and resultant revenue shortfalls for governments of all types. It is unclear whether and to what degree economic recovery will occur subsequent to the 2009-2011 biennium. Currently, there are no funds available for Family Policy Council education events during the 2009-2011 biennium. And yet, continuation of systemic learning is desirable, and perhaps necessary to sustaining the partnership's ability to produce outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: SEEK FUNDING FOR EDUCATION EVENTS

There is a sixteen-year history of convening Community Networks, their partners, and Family Policy Council member agencies to:

- Advance the mission of the organization through learning and innovation;
- Strengthen ties and affiliations among partners to support collaboration and complementary innovation;
- Strengthen the culture of the Family Policy Council family-community-state partnership, including its values, business practices, and priorities;
- Implement and extend the primary values of the system; and
- Comply with the statutory requirements of the Family Policy Council.

The return on investment has been extraordinary. In addition to the improvement of individual Networks' performance over time, the education program has:

- Engaged a broad range of "parents and other residents," and fostered their leadership at the local and state level;
- Provided support for civic engagement, application of data, utilization of a public health approach, and implementation of Review of Community Efforts, as specified by law;
- Helped to develop a field that advances reduction in the rates of problem behaviors;
- Facilitated innovation;
- Fostered the development of a knowledge ecology that strategically positions Washington as the leader in reducing the rates of major social problems;
- Developed a foundation for public policy to be based in the most leading-edge science available to solve the toughest social problems;
- Reduced barriers to transfer of training thereby ensuring continuous improvement in child- and family-serving systems as well as rates of costly social problems;
- Facilitated the development of community capacity; and

- Developed tools to be used by Washington residents to promote Thriving Families, safe communities, and hope for the future.

Continued funding of education events would help to sustain all that has been accomplished, and continue to advance progress on the Community Learning Taxonomy.

NEXT STEPS FOR EDUCATION EVENTS

Over the past several years, education has focused on a mix of the middle-order domains on the Community Learning Taxonomy: *Problem Behaviors*, *Antecedents and Known Practice*; and *Civic Engagement and Public Policy*. There is still work to be done in these domains, specifically:

- Emphasizing what is known practice in the development of individual, relational and community resilience.
- Increasing the number of people and communities engaged in the change process.
- Supporting Networks in applying their knowledge and innovations across new and related functions, such as mental health, health care reform, and education.
- Supporting Networks in moving their ideas into innovations, and specifically into procedures, programs and other forms of public policy. This may include proliferating Review and may take additional pathways as well.

It is also time to begin to move the whole system up the taxonomy by giving greater attention to public health, data functions, and Systems Thinking.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: ENHANCE LEARNING WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

The Family Policy Council has necessarily emerged as a learning organization. “Learning organization” is a technical term used by Peter Senge, Margaret Wheatley and others who argue that typically, organizations don’t learn. Rather, individuals within the organization learn from their experience and mistakes, while the organization itself continues to operate from the same rigid rules and procedures that produced the mistakes to begin with. Improving the capacity of the organization itself to learn and then promoting organizational learning is fundamental to making systems change.

In order to drive continuous improvement, innovation and success in the partnership, it is recommended that the Family Policy Council develop concurrently business practices, funding strategies, and learning strategies to realize prioritized system learning objectives. Whether these learning objectives are pursued simultaneously or sequentially during the 2009-2013 period will be determined by available resources and the scope of work selected by the Family Policy Council.

RECOMMENDED SYSTEM LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR 2009-2013

Using Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle as a framework and available resources, including those leveraged from the philanthropic sector, the Family Policy Council family-community-state partnership ought to:

- Increase knowledge and skill for responding to the needs of communities based on their community capacity and accumulated rates of problem behaviors. The organization will improve its ability to distinguish among the types of communities and will develop tools to ensure a best fit between the help offered by the State and what is applicable and useful at the local level.
- Increase understanding of community capacity and develop the skills and tools needed to further develop the capacity of all Washington Communities.
- Increase understanding of the knowledge ecology and develop the skills and tools needed to: provide organizational supports; increase the advantage already accruing in Washington State; identify needed complementary innovations and attract partners, specialists or relationships necessary to facilitate the achievement of complementary innovations; and improve the flow of information within the ecology.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: BUILD ON STRENGTHS

Importantly, there are great strengths within the system to sustain it during this economically lean time, including:

- A culture of continuous learning, which will afford opportunities to ask key questions and explore them as part of business practice;
- A common identity among partners in the system, including a common vocabulary for solving problems together in informal ways, such as email or phone calls;
- An expansive library of articles, handouts from education events, briefing materials and other documents that can be accessed in order to promote authoritative information;
- Volunteers and Network Staff throughout out the state who have provided technical assistance to others and who will likely continue to do so. It may be possible to recruit these or other volunteers to document the wisdom and experience of these TA providers;
- A cadre of individuals trained to present *The High Cost of Adverse Childhood Experiences*, which can be used to facilitate the on-going identity development of the system. In addition, these individuals may have the skills and experience needed to organize peer-to-peer sharing of high quality information.

It would be difficult to overstate the generosity, goodwill, commitment and skills of the thousands of volunteers who have participated in the Family Policy Council family-community-state partnership over the years. And “making space at the table” for these volunteers to come forward and lead progress up the Community Network Learning Taxonomy ought to be viewed as a tremendous resource.

The following four priorities build on the existing strengths of the system:

1. **Continue to sustain a continuous learning environment by leveraging business practices that prompt and protect learning as a practice of the field.**

Continuous learning culture is one of two organizational components that extend the transfer of training (Cromwell and Kolb, 2004) and much learning in the Family Policy Council system has been fostered by the business and accountability practices of the organization. For example, contracts with Networks (the mechanism specified by law to deliver funding to communities) require that communities demonstrate learning. Biennial reporting forms require Community Networks to articulate what they have learned from the previous two years' investments and how they will integrate those discoveries into their next two years of programming. Careful consideration of each business process may offer no-cost opportunities to expand learning even during economically difficult times when no education events are offered.

Gaudine and Saks (2004) found that environmental cues about when to apply new, complex skills help to ensure transfer. Therefore, special consideration should be given to business communication and/or practices that fulfill this function.

Instruction or business practices that embrace error management—direction on how to learn from the mistakes that will inevitably be made while solving difficult problems—will foster not only learning but expanded problem solving ability (Keith and Frese, 2005). Whenever feasible, using errors or missteps as learning opportunities rather than cause for sanction will help to keep the community learning even in the absence of formal learning opportunities.

Finally, it is important to remember that adults continue to learn from past exposures to education for some time (see for example Medina, 2008). In fact, in research settings positive transfer of training was found only after one year (Cromwell and Kolb, 2004). Continuing to re-enforce past lessons may help cement them. "When the environment is dynamic, people need more feedback concerning their performance" (Choi and Ruona, 2008); asking communities to set proximal (short-term) and distal (long-term) performance goals based on past participation in education may result in communities learning more deeply from lessons that have already been given. This strategy has been used effectively in the past by Family Policy Council staff member delivering technical assistance to communities.

2. **Recruit individuals who can round out or complete the knowledge ecology due to their expertise and willingness to contribute.**

The Family Policy Council and Community Networks are accustomed to "sharing the burden" when it comes to knowledge and expertise. First, no one individual can master all the elements of the Community Learning Taxonomy. And second, as an effective volunteer organization, the partnership knows the importance of creating opportunities for every participant to give their gifts and wisdom to benefit the enterprise and get results. In the absence of formal education, efforts should be made to recruit individuals who: 1) have needed information, and 2) have the skills to teach others. The Family Policy Council made need to develop mechanisms at the state level to facilitate this approach, such as the ACE trainer database, which keeps track of the 40 volunteers trained to give *The High Cost of Adverse Childhood Experiences* PowerPoint, their location and availability, and suitability for particular audiences.

3. **Leverage available technologies, such as blogging and streamed video.**

The Internet opens many avenues for teaching and learning. The Family Policy Council routinely uses its web page to distribute journal articles, conference handouts, and relevant data. Other low-cost methods are available. For example, blogging has been used successfully to support the training of trainers. Each person qualified to give *The High Cost of Adverse Childhood Experiences* PowerPoint attended in-person training and received one-to-one coaching. In addition, staff set up a blog that asks trainers to post answers to tough questions. In addition to sharing key information, it allows the Family Policy Council to monitor skills and make adjustments as needed. Blogs could be used to share information, facilitate question asking or to support communities of practice.

Because there are so many technologies in the market place and they change so frequently, it may be helpful to recruit others to evaluate methods, make recommendations and teach staff how to utilize select tools. There are many partners in the system who are qualified to do so.

4. **Develop tools and strategies to ensure that all newcomers are oriented to the lower orders of the Community Learning Taxonomies.**

One of the most difficult challenges in the Network system is the constant engagement of new partners. It is critical that all Washingtonians who step up to help be welcomed and empowered—with the needed knowledge and skills to participate fully. It is critical that volunteer board members learn about the legal and contractual responsibilities of the organizations they govern; the current New Board Orientation may be adapted to reach more individuals, for example, through streaming video on the Internet or monthly conference calls; leaders in the field may take over this task.

New staff members must *master Operations, Legal Obligations and Public Accountability*. The Family Policy Council may want to re-double efforts to monitor critical functions like compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. In addition, staff members must gain fluency in *Volunteer and Board Management* and *Community Collaboration* to be effective. It may be possible to develop a buddy system, a new staff blog, or a mentoring structure to ensure that training is taking place.

It is important to acknowledge that cuts in education will not be the only cuts taking place at the Family Policy Council. Staff will be slashed, and because grant funding will become essential at least some staff will need to prioritize work that is not currently in the book of business. The Family Policy Council is a tremendously resourceful and successful volunteer organization. A small investment to organize volunteers on behalf of education during the early months of the 2009-2011 biennium will likely extend learning and ease stressors on remaining staff.